

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 06108

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR, US, MPOL, PEPR
SUBJECT: CODEL PRICE MEETING AT THE SUPREME SOVIET MARCH 27

SUVVARQ: THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE'S THREE-HOUR MEETING AT THE SUPREME SOVIET WAS A VERY FRANK EXCHANGE ON A RANGE OF ARMS-RELATED ISSUES. THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION WAS THE NEUTRON BOMB WITH SHITIKOV'S OPENING STATEMENT BEING A VERY SHARP ATTACK ON THE U.S. AND NATO ON THIS ISSUE. SHITIKOV'S REMARKS WERE REBUTTED BY CHAIRMAN PRICE AND AFTER AN INITIAL BIT OF UNFORTUNATE BAITING IN RETURN BY SHITIKOV THE DISCUSSION SETTLED DOWN WITH THE TWO SIDES GIVING AND TAKING IN ABOUT EQUAL MEASURE. AS AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE HASC TO SOVIET THINKING AND DEBATING TECHNIQUES, AND AS AN INITIAL VIEW OF THE HASC FOR MOST OF THE SOVIET PARTICIPANTS, THE MEETING WAS USEFUL. END SUMMARY.

1. CODEL PRICE HAD THEIR FIRST SUBSTANTIVE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SOVIETS ON THIS CURRENT TRIP ON MARCH 27 IN A THREE-HOUR SESSION AT THE SUPREME SOVIET. SOVIET INTERLOCUTORS WERE LED BY A. P. SHITIKOV, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE UNION AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE SUPREME SOVIET PRESIDIUM, AND INCLUDED G. A. ARBATOV, DIRECTOR OF THE USA INSTITUTE, N. M. INOZEMTSEV, DIRECTOR OF IMEMO, G. A. ZHUKOV, PRAVDA COMMENTATOR AND IUSAC MEMBER,
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L. N. TOLKUNOV, DIRECTOR OF NOVOSTI PRESS AGENCY,
P. T. PIMENOV, SECRETARY OF THE ALL-UNION CENTRAL COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS, A. B. CHAKOVSKIY, EDITOR OF LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. ALL ARE MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME SOVIET.

2. SHITIKOV LED OFF WITH A LONG, TOUGHLY-WORDED, PREPARED TEXT WHICH, AFTER A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

SHOWING HOW FAR U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS HAVE COME IN THE PAST DECADE SINCE THE TIME OF "CONFRONTATION," STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE U.S. FOR THE CURRENT STATE OF RELATIONS. HE TROTTED OUT THE STANDARD SOVIET ARGUMENTS ABOUT DOMESTIC "FORCES OPPOSED TO DETENTE," THE BUILDUP OF NATO FORCES, THERECORD MILITARY BUDGET, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRUISE MISSILE.

3. THE MAIN SECTION OF HIS REMARKS FOCUSED DIRECTLY ON THE NEUTRON BOMB WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN "CYNICALLY" PRESENTED IN THE U.S. AS A SMALL, HUMANE, PURELY DEFENSIVE BOMB WHEN IN FACT IT IS AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON, "AS YOU ARE AWARE." HE TOOK STRONG EXCEPTION TO A REMARK HE ATTRIBUTED TO ACDA DIRECTOR WARNKE (CITING A JAN. 7 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE) THAT THE NEW WEAPON WOULD KILL MORE RUSSIANS AND SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER GERMANS, AND THAT THIS WAS WHY THE BOMB WAS INVENTED. SINCE THE BOMB WOULD BE USED ON FRG TERRITORY, HE STATED, IT WOULD KILL GERMANS AND THIS EXPLAINS THE STRONG PROTESTS IN THE FRG. AFTER POINTING TO THE BREZHNEV PROPOSAL ON THE BOMB, SHITIKOV WARNED THAT SHOULD THE U.S. AND NATO DECIDE TO DEPLOY THE WEAPON THE SOVIET UNION WOULD HAVE TO GIVE "A WELL DESERVED REPLY AND THAT REPLY WOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE AND OUR ALLIES."

4. CONGRESSMAN PRICE RESPONDED AND NOTED THE "MISUNDER-CONFIDENTIAL

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STANDINGS" WHICH WERE EVIDENT IN SHITIKOV'S REMARKS. HE SAID THAT AS SHITIKOV PROCLAIMED THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD NO INTENTION TO ATTACK THE WEST, SO THE U.S. HAD NO INTENTION TO ATTACK THE USSR, AND THAT THE U.S. HAS NEVER STARTED A WAR. HE STRESSED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE MISINTERPRETING THE U.S. MILITARY BUDGET, AND IGNORING THE DECISIONS TO CANCEL THE B-1 BOMBER PRODUCTION AND CANCEL AN ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT CARRIER, SLOW R&D ON THE M-X MISSILE, AND NOT INCREASE ICBMS. HE THEN DEFENDED THE NEUTRON BOMB AS A WEAPON WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE WIDE-RANGING BLAST EFFECT AND THUS CONCENTRATE THE DESTRUCTION ON MILITARY TARGETS. SHITIKOV TOOK THE FLOOR TO INSIST REPEATEDLY AND BELIGERENTLY THAT PRICE "ANSWER MY QUESTION," WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE A QUESTION ABOUT WHOM THE BOMB WOULD BE USED ON. ARBATOV GOT HIM TO DROP OFF AND THE MEETING CONTINUED IN A MORE RELAXED, ALTHOUGH STILL FRANK, VEIN.

5. THE RANKING REPUBLICAN MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE BOB WILSON THEN DEFENDED THE NEUTRON BOMB PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT AS A DEFENSIVE NATO MOVE TO COUNTERACT NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS SUCH AS THE SS-20 AND THE GROWTH OF

SOVIET CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE. HE DESCRIBED THE SS-20 AS A MUCH MORE "AGGRESSIVE" WEAPON AND NOTED THAT, UNLIKE THE NEUTRON BOMB WHICH COULD NOT EFFECTIVELY BE USED BY ATTACKING FORCES, THE SS-20 IS AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON. HE THEN ADDED THAT HE IN FACT WAS NOT IN FAVOR OF EITHER OF THESE TWO WEAPONS SYSTEMS. REPRESENTATIVE MARJORIE HOLT ADDRESSED THE QUESTION OF THE "SOVIET THREAT" WHICH SHITIKOV HAD IDENTIFIED AS "IMAGINED." SHE SAID THAT THE SOVIET BUILDUP IN EUROPE WAS OF GREAT CONCERN TO THE UNITED STATES AND THAT AN ADEQUATE SOVIET EXPLANATION HAS NOT YET BEEN GIVEN FOR THE INCREASED CONVENTIONAL GROUND FORCE TROOP LEVELS OR THE 3 TO 1 ADVANTAGE IN TANK FORCES. WITH SUCH FORCE LEVELS IT WAS HARD TO CONSIDER THAT THE SOVIET THREAT

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WAS SIMPLY "IMAGINED."

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6. INOZEMTSEV UNDERTOOK TO RESPOND TO WILSON AND HOLT AND ARGUED THAT ONE SHOULD NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF TANK FORCE LEVELS SINCE THE REASON THE SOVIETS HAVE MORE TANKS IN EUROPE THAN DOES THE WEST HAS TO DO WITH THE "ABSOLUTELY DIFFERENT STRATEGIC SITUATION IN EUROPE" WHICH EXISTS FOR THE SOVIETS AS OPPOSED TO NATO. HE ARGUED THAT THE ADVANTAGES IN SOME WEAPONS SYSTEMS COULD BE OFFSET BY OTHER SYSTEMS WHICH THE OTHER SIDE POSSESSES AND THAT GEOGRAPHICAL DEFICIENCIES

ON ONE SIDE COULD BE OFFSET BY OTHER FACTORS. IN ANY CASE, HE ASSURED THE CONGRESSMEN THAT THE SOVIET UNION "WILL TAKE CARE OF ITS DEFENSE" BUT THAT IT WILL NOT SEEK MILITARY SUPERIORITY. HE THEN ARGUED THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE NOW REACHED THE POINT WHERE THEY CAN "CREATE NEW CATEGORIES OF WEAPONS" WHICH COULD LEAD TO A NEW SPIRAL IN THE ARMS RACE. HE WARNED THAT IF THE NEUTRON BOMB IS SUCH A "GOOD WEAPON" THEN THE SOVIET UNION COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO RENOUNCE THIS OPTION SHOULD NATO DEPLOY IT. HE URGED THE CONGRESSMEN TO CONSIDER THE SOVIET MDW PROPOSAL AS ONE MEANS OF PREVENTING THE NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS FROM BEING DEVELOPED AND DEPLOYED.

7. REPRESENTATIVE SAMUEL STRATTON TOOK INOZEMTSEV UP ON HIS OWN ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE IN FORCE STRUCTURE IN EUROPE TO ARGUE THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF THE BALANCE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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FORCES IN EUROPE AND NOT AS AN ISOLATED SPECIAL CASE.

8. ZHUKOV TOOK THE FLOOR FOR THE SOVIET SIDE AND GAVE A LONG INVOLVED DISCOURSE ON THE PEACEFUL INTENTIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION WHICH COULD BE DISCERNED BY OBSERVING THE SOVIET INVESTMENT IN ITS OWN DEVELOPMENT WHICH IT WOULD CLEARLY NOT WISH TO SEE DESTROYED BY A NUCLEAR EXCHANGE. HE CLAIMED THAT NATO WAS FOSTERING AN ARMS RACE BY STEPPING UP ITS MILITARY BUDGET BY 3 PERCENT EACH YEAR. HE ALSO DISPUTED WHETHER IN FACT THE U.S. WAS RESTRAINING ITS MILITARY BUDGET AND POINTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRIDENT SYSTEM AND THE NUCLEAR AIRCRAFT CARRIER EISENHOWER AS EXAMPLES OF LACK OF RESTRAINT ON THE U.S. SIDE.

9. REPRESENTATIVE CHARLES WILSON RESPONDED TO ZHUKOV BY CITING THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF SOVIET WEAPONS SYSTEMS WHICH WERE A CONCERN TO THE U.S., SUCH AS THE SS-20, THE LARGE AND EXPANDING CHEMICAL WARFARE UNITS DEPLOYED IN EASTERN EUROPE, AS WELL AS THOSE SYSTEMS MENTIONED EARLIER BY THE OTHER U.S. SPEAKERS. INOZEMTSEV AGREED THAT ALL OF THESE NEW SYSTEMS ARE CAUSING PROBLEMS AND SAID THAT FOR THIS REASON WE MUST "CONSIDER ALL OF THEM" AND SERIOUSLY ATTEMPT TO STOP NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS FROM BEING DEPLOYED. HE ASSERTED THAT WHEN AND IF SALT IS CONCLUDED, BOTH SIDES MUST BE SURE THAT SALT WILL NOT BE CIRCUMVENTED BY A NEW WEAPONS BREAKTHROUGH SINCE THIS WOULD BE AN UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT FOR BOTH THE U.S. AND THE SOVIETS WERE IT TO HAPPEN.

10. REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD ICHORD ARGUED THAT THE NEUTRON

BOMB DECISION HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE IN THE UNITED STATES
AND THAT THE UNITED STATES, IN REACHING A DECISION ON THE
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NEUTRON BOMB, WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER THE EXISTENCE OF
MANY WEAPONS SYSTEMS ON THE SOVIET SIDE SUCH AS THE
BACKFIRE BOMBER, CHEMICAL WARFARE CAPABILITIES, ANTI-
SATELLITE WEAPONS, AS WELL AS THE SS-20. REPRESENTATIVE
CHARLES WILSON ASKED THE SOVIETS TO BACK UP THEIR
PROCLAMATIONS OF PEACEFUL INTENTIONS AND THEIR DESIRE
FOR ECONOMIC AND NOT MILITARY COMPETITION BY REVEALING
MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SOVIET MILITARY BUDGET SO THAT
WE WOULD HAVE SOME BASIS FOR COMPARING OURS TO THAT OF
THE USSR. HE ARGUED THAT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN THE SOVIET UNION WOULD DO MUCH
TO ALLEVIATE THE CONCERNS IN THE UNITED STATES ABOUT THE
SOVIET MILITARY THREAT AND THAT SUCH CHANGES IN THE SOVIET
SYSTEM WERE DESIRABLE IF WE WERE TO CONTINUE DETENTE.

11. ARBATOV RESPONDED THAT PEACEFUL COMPETITION DID
NOT PRESUPPOSE THAT WE WERE TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE
TWO SYSTEMS INTERNALLY. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE MOTIVES
AND INTENTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES WERE NOT QUITE AS
PACIFIC AS THE CONGRESSMEN PRETENDED AND REFERRED TO THE
RECORDS AND HEARINGS OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ITSELF WHICH HE SAID WOULD "STRIKE FEAR IN THE HEARTS
OF THOSE WHO READ THEM" WERE THEY TO BE PUBLISHED IN

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THE SOVIET PRESS. HE THEN ARGUED AT LENGTH THAT THE LAST 10, 20 AND 30 YEARS HAVE NOT SEEN ANY INCREASE IN THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OR SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION AND THAT A CONTINUATION OF THE ARMS COMPETITION WOULD NOT LEAD TO ANY BENEFITS FOR THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FLOYD SPENCE TOOK UP REPRESENTATIVE WILSON'S SUGGESTION FOR OPENNESS ON THE PART OF THE SOVIETS IN REVEALING THEIR DEFENSE POSTURE AND MILITARY STRUCTURE. IF THERE WERE MISUNDERSTANDINGS, HE SAID, THESE COULD BE CLEARED UP BY AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION SO THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD UNDERSTAND HOW MANY PLANES, SHIPS AND TROOPS THE OTHER SIDE POSSESSED.

12. TOLKUNOV GAVE THE FINAL INTERVENTION IN WHICH HE DECRIED THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND SALT WHICH HE ASSERTED WERE ON COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PLANES AND THAT SALT WOULD BE CONTINUALLY THREATENED IF ONE WERE TO LINK IT TO SUCH FAR AWAY ISSUES. HE SAID THAT IN THE FUTURE THERE MIGHT WELL BE OTHER CONFLICTS AND TO LINK THEM TO SALT WOULD BE TO "TORPEDO" SALT.

13. THE TWO SIDES THEN EXPRESSED THEIR SATISFACTION WITH THE EXCHANGE AND THE MUTUAL BENEFITS TO BE GAINED BY SUCH VISITS. SHITIKOV EXTENDED AN INVITATION TO THE CONGRESSMEN TO RETURN TO THE SOVIET UNION AND CALLED SPECIFIC ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THERE IS AN OUT-CONFIDENTIAL

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STANDING INVITATION FOR A VISIT TO THE USSR BY A JOINT HOUSE-SENATE DELEGATION. TOON

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